

## **Water Quality - Marine Water: Overview**

The monitoring of marine waters in Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program is focused on assessing temperature, salinity, density, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, chlorophyll, and fecal coliform bacteria. These variables can be used to help assess eutrophication, sewage waste, food available to secondary producers, and pelagic habitat quality, as well as to determine compliance with federal and Washington State water quality standards. Based on data from 1994 – 2000, the areas of greatest marine water quality concern are Budd Inlet, southern Hood Canal, and Penn Cove on Whidbey Island.

## **Stormwater: Overview**

Stormwater is precipitation that runs off surfaces such as rooftops, paved streets, highways, and parking lots. It can also come from hard, grassy surfaces like lawns, play fields, and from graveled roads and parking lots. This water drains to storm drains, streams, and eventually to Puget Sound.

Stormwater, if not properly managed, can pose both water quality and water quantity problems. Stormwater typically contains heavy metals, oil and grease, organic toxins, bacteria, nutrients, and sediments. The sources of these pollutants include motor vehicles, industrial activities, construction activities, fertilizers, and erosion. These pollutants degrade water quality, harm or kill fish and other aquatic life, contaminate sediments, and can threaten drinking water supplies. Large volumes of stormwater can degrade stream channels, alter or destroy fish and wildlife habitat, and cause flooding.

The EPA regulates discharge of stormwater through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) is given the responsibility to administer this system. NPDES permits are issued for both construction and operation. Cities with stormwater outfalls for discharge of stormwater to surface waters, operate their stormwater management program under this permit. DOE publishes a guidance document, Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington (August 2001) to guide local governments to better management of stormwater. The Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan requires local governments to adopt the DOE stormwater manual or an equivalent manual. The City of Mountlake Terrace uses the current DOE manual, but may adapt specific items to fit requirements and needs of Mountlake Terrace. The DOE manual and any revisions could be adopted in the City's development regulations. [Note: The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team evaluates stormwater management programs in the region by tracking programmatic and environmental measures.]